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SUBJECT: CHAD: European Commission support for  
Chadian political party capacity building

1. (SBU) Summary: The European Commission (EC) seeks to develop a program to support the capacity of Chadian political parties to engage in a national political dialogue in the near term, and to be able to compete responsibly in an open democratic process over the longer term. Chad's current political situation is marked by an absence of viable democratic institutions, growing political opposition (both armed and pacific), defections from the government to rebel movements and a boycott of the political process by the peaceful political opposition. An EC-funded democratization consultant has conducted a preliminary evaluation of Chad's political system that he hopes will lead to a capacity-building program to include preparation of a draft training manual, pilot testing of the manual and subsequent preparation of a trainer's training manual. End Summary

2. (SBU) The EC Delegation held two meetings earlier this month for a small group of representatives of embassies and international organizations concerned with Chadian democratization to discuss its ongoing effort to develop a political party capacity building project for Chad. Chaired by the EC head of delegation, the meetings included an EC-funded democratization consultant and representatives of UNDP and the French and U.S. embassies. The EC does not seek additional funding for this planned activity, but does welcome USG interest in and encouragement of the effort.

#### EC Objectives in Face of Chad's Political Reality

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3. The EC-funded consultant described Chad's political reality as one of a centralized undemocratic system marked by popular distrust and a widespread perception of fraud and fixed elections. The EC seeks to develop a program to support the capacity of Chadian political parties to engage in a national political dialogue in the near term, and to be able to compete responsibly in an open democratic process over the longer term. Were the political system to open up tomorrow, like the citizens of the former Yugoslavia and many Eastern Bloc countries, Chadian political parties and their leaders would be ill prepared to play the democratic game. Laying the groundwork today by building democratic political capacity is seen by the EC as an investment in a future with a five-year to ten-year time horizon. After 42 years of armed rebellion, there is the hope that even the government realizes that some political opening is needed.

#### Feasibility of Capacity-building Project

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¶4. (SBU) At this stage, the feasibility of a political capacity building project is still under study. The terms of reference note that due largely to the absence of viable democratic institutions, actors and mechanisms, Chad's current political situation is marked by growing political opposition (both armed and pacific), defections from the government to rebel movements and a boycott of the political process by the peaceful political opposition.

¶5. (SBU) The consultant's preliminary assessment of Chad's political system concluded that there was only one national party in scope and structure, the MPS (Movement Patriotique pour le Salut). Among the 78 other registered parties (the expert said that he had actually counted 127), only ten are represented in the National Assembly. He noted that some of these ten ostensibly independent opposition parties are subject to substantial MPS influence. Remaining parties largely lack the following, funding and/or the ideological (as opposed to ethnic) definition required to be taken seriously, even were the system more open.

¶6. (SBU) The expert's review of deficiencies in the existing political system were numerous. He cited the absence of regulation, including party rights and responsibilities, and public funding for political parties or of election campaigns. He noted that the absence of publicly-financed election campaigns limits the effective ability to compete in elections to a handful of parties and that, while parties by law are to be given equitable access to the media during political campaigns, there are no legal provisions for enforcement. He also identified voter registration

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deficiencies, the inaccuracy of existing voter lists for parliamentary and national elections and the lack of objectivity of the electoral commission as basic structural deficiencies.

¶7. (SBU) The EC expert is in the process of identifying and contracting a qualified Chadian consulting firm to assist him in evaluating the organization, internal procedures, popular support base and the human and financial resources of Chadian political parties. Based on findings, the expert envisages designing a capacity-building project to include preparation of a draft training manual, the pilot testing of the manual and subsequent preparation of a trainer's training manual.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: The EC effort to develop a political party capacity-building project is consistent with the "Governing Justly and Democratically" foreign policy objective identified as a top priority in the Mission Program Plan (MPP) as well as in Embassy's FY 2007 Budget Narrative Justification. It is also consistent with the Department's view of how foreign assistance efforts in developing countries, such as Chad, should be focused. Given the absence of USG funding available for this MPP goal, Embassy believes EC effort merits our strong encouragement. End comment.  
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